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35TH CONGRESS, 1st Session. } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { REPORT No. 84.

MARY W. THOMPSON.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 265.]

FEBRUARY 4, 1858.

Mr. CHAFFEE, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, made the following

REPORT.

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom were referred the papers of Mary W. Thompson, widow of Lieutenant Colonel Alexander R. Thompson, late of the United States army, deceased, report:

That said Mary W. Thompson received a half-pay pension for five years, under a general law granting half-pay pensions to certain "*widows whose husbands had been killed or died of wounds while in the service of the United States*," to wit, from December 25, 1837, (the date of her husband's death,) until December 25, 1842. when her pension terminated. From this period until January 1, 1852, *she received no pension whatever*. On her application to Congress at this time for a pension for life, the Senate passed a bill for her relief; but during that session it did not get through the House, but remained on the calendar. In 1853 the House took up the Senate's bill for her relief, and passed it, allowing her thereby a pension from January 1, 1852, to continue during her widowhood. While the bill was on its passage in the House an amendment was added thereto, placing the names of the widows of Majors Dade and Lomax upon the bill, giving to these latter widows pensions for life, to commence some twelve years back, or from the date of their husbands' deaths, thus making it an uninterrupted relief to these widows. The design of this bill is merely to place Mrs. Thompson on the same footing with these and other widows whose husbands have been slain in battle, by filling up the period during which she received no pension, and thus give her a continuous pension from her husband's death, and during her widowhood. It will therefore be nothing more than an act of equal justice to pass this bill for the widow of a brave and meritorious officer who sacrificed his life in his country's service.

Your committee annex a copy of the report of the Senate committee, made in this case January 19, 1852.

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"The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the memorial of Mary W. Thompson, beg leave to report:

"That the memorialist is the widow of the late Lieutenant Colonel Alexander R. Thompson, who was killed at the head of his regiment on the 25th of December, 1837, in an action with the Indians in Florida, after faithfully serving his country for upwards of twenty-five years. On the death of her husband Mrs. Thompson received a pension, which was continued for five years, under the law of April 16, 1816; and in 1844 she asked of Congress a renewal and continuance of the pension, grounding her claim upon the long and valuable services of her husband, his death in battle, on several precedents, and on valuable services which she had herself rendered during his lifetime. Her memorial was presented to the House of Representatives, and on the 24th of May, 1844, the committee to whom it had been referred made a favorable report thereon, in which they say: 'The memorial does no more than justice to the memory and gallant services of one of the most meritorious of those distinguished officers whose virtues and whose bravery have reflected so much credit upon the American army. During a service of about twenty-six years, Colonel Thompson was distinguished in every grade through which he passed. The committee have been furnished with testimonials in his behalf of the highest commendation, from the most distinguished officers of the army. Colonel Thompson has also been required to perform public services and agencies of a civil character, which were entirely out of the line of his official military duties, involving high responsibilities. To enable him to discharge these satisfactorily to the government, it was necessary for him to have an assistant; this assistance was rendered by the memorialist, by the devotion of much of her time for a series of years, or rather by giving her time to the government, and thereby rendering important services.' 'The case of the petitioner is peculiar; the services of her husband were such as are rarely, if ever, rendered; and the circumstances of his death, in a war wherein no glory was to be gained—a war of suffering and disease, wherein *all* was at hazard, and nothing to be gained—must be taken into consideration (in the opinion of the committee) in estimating the compensation to be allowed.'

"In 1848 the memorial was again presented to the House of Representatives, and again a favorable report was made on the 18th of May of that year, in which the committee made, as a part of their own report, that of the 24th of May, 1844. The report of May, 1848, sets forth: 'That Colonel Thompson was a most gallant officer, and extremely useful in the service, as well in the management of his corps in action and in camp, his personal bravery in conflict, and in his instruction of the officers and troops under his command, in preparing them for their duties in the service, while, at the same time, he performed other duties not pertaining to his station, in which he was assisted by his wife, the memorialist, who thus gave her services to

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the government in the exercise of duties important to the country, and which did not pertain to her or to her husband. These facts are most fully sustained by a letter of Major General Gaines, and from other evidences which have been presented to your committee.'

"The committee, in view of the facts presented to them, have reported a bill providing a pension for the memorialist during her widowhood."

Your committee therefore recommend for adoption the accompanying bill.

22 Jan. 18--

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